

Capsule Summary
SM-502
Phillis Wheatley School
Hollywood vicinity
Private

Circa 1915

The Phillis Wheatley School is significant as one of the few one-room schoolhouses to survive in St. Mary's County. Built around 1915, this building appears to have been the second schoolhouse constructed on the lot. Deeds for the property go back to the 1870s, a particularly early date for a school dedicated to the education of African-American children in St. Mary's County. Both the interior and exterior of the schoolhouse have been sheathed with modern materials. Only the exterior form of the building, with its distinctive hipped roof, suggests its former use as a schoolhouse.

John F. Magill transferred this quarter acre lot to the Board of County School Commissioners in 1877 "for the purpose of erecting...a school house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of St. Mary's County." The property ceased to be used for school purposes around 1951, and in 1954 both the property and the school building were purchased by Paul and Agnes Guy. From the Guys the property passed to the Curtis family. Louis E. and Mary H. Holley purchased the tract in 1979 and converted the former school house for use as a dwelling.

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), the school's namesake, is nationally recognized as the first published African-American poet. Born in Africa, she was sold as a slave to the family of a tailor in Boston. The first bound volume of her poetry was published in 1773.

SM-502, Phillis Wheatley School
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Industrial - Urban Dominance, 1870 - 1930.

Historic Period Theme: Education

Resource Type

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use: School

Known Design Source: none

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. SM-502

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Phillis Wheatley School

2. Location

street & number Sotterley Gate Road

☐ not for publication

city, town Hollywood

☒ vicinity of

congressional district 5

state Maryland

county St. Mary's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Louis E. and Mary H. Holley

street & number P.O.Box 5

telephone no.: 301-373-3219

city, town Hollywood

state and zip code MD 20636

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse

liber MRB 39

street & number

folio 268

city, town Leonardtown

state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. SM-502

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The Phillis Wheatley School is located on the east side of Sotterley Gate Road near Hollywood in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Built as a one-room school house, the building has been converted for use as a dwelling and enlarged. The former schoolhouse faces west and is capped by a hipped roof.

Probably built around 1915, the school is a one-story building sheathed with aluminum siding and roofed with asphalt shingles. Modern one-story additions, constructed around 1991, are attached to the south and east elevations of the building. A basement has also been added underneath the structure.

The west (main) elevation of the building is pierced by a modern door with sidelights and is flanked on either side by two two-over-two sash windows. A hipped-roof porch with a cement pad floor extends across the full width of the first floor. The porch roof is supported by square wood posts. A modern, one-story kitchen addition is attached to the south elevation.

Both the south and east elevations are covered by modern additions.

The north elevation is pierced by two two-over-two sash windows with louvered shutters. A window also lights the basement.

The interior of the main block has been divided with partition walls and sheathed with modern materials. A stairwell, opposite the entrance door, provides access to the basement.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-502

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				African-Amer. Hist.

Specific dates ☐ None **Builder/Architect** ☐ Unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or
Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Phillis Wheatley School is significant as one of the few one-room schoolhouses to survive in St. Mary's County. Built around 1915, this building appears to have been the second schoolhouse constructed on the lot. Deeds for the property go back to the 1870s, a particularly early date for a school dedicated to the education of African-American children in St. Mary's County. Both the interior and exterior of the schoolhouse have been sheathed with modern materials. Only the exterior form of the building, with its distinctive hipped roof, suggests its former use as a schoolhouse.

John F. Magill transferred this quarter acre lot to the Board of County School Commissioners in 1877 "for the purpose of erecting...a school house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of St. Mary's County." The property ceased to be used for school purposes around 1951, and in 1954 both the property and the school building were purchased by Paul and Agnes Guy. From the Guys the property passed to the Curtis family. Louis E. and Mary H. Holley purchased the tract in 1979 and converted the former school house for use as a dwelling.

According to Mrs. Elmer Young, who attended the school in the 1920s, the interior of the schoolhouse consisted of one large classroom with a back closet for coats and a small vestibule for the teacher. Grades one through eight, totaling around forty students, were taught there by Miss Gertrude Bailey. In later years, Mrs. Alice Freeman Young and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lee taught at the school. The school was heated by an iron wood stove and an outdoor privy was located behind the school building. Some students walked between eight and ten miles to school. Others arrived by skiff on the creek that ran behind the school. School attendance was not regular as many of the children's families were farmers and required the assistance of all family members during the planting and harvesting seasons.

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), the school's namesake, is nationally recognized as the first published African-American poet. Born in Africa, she was sold as a slave to the family of a tailor in Boston. The first bound volume of her poetry was published in 1773.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-502

Young, Mrs. Elmer. Telephone Interview, May 1995.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .25 acresQuadrangle name HollywoodQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting NorthingB

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Zone Easting NorthingC

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D

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E

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Hughes, HIstoric Sites Surveyororganization St. Mary's County DPZdate May 1995

street & number

telephone 301-475-4662city or town Lecnardtownstate MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: ~~Maryland Historical Trust~~
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

SM-502, Phillis Wheatley School
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: Louis E. Holley and Mary H. Holley
FROM: John V. Curtis and John H. Curtis
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 39, folio 263.
DATE: March 30, 1979.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 of an acre.

TO: John V. and John H. Curtis
FROM: Agnes E. Guy, widow.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber DBK 218, folio 191.
DATE: September 25, 1974.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 of an acre.

TO: Agnes E. Guy and Paul D. Guy
FROM: Board of Education of St. Mary's County
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 218, folio 188.
DATE: September 23, 1974.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 of an acre (with this confirmatory deed the right of reverter is extinguished).

TO: Paul D. Guy and Agnes E. Guy
FROM: Board of Education of St. Mary's County
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 54, folio 42.
DATE: November 9, 1954.
NOTES: Transfer of a right to the buildings located on the 1/4 tract that formerly belonged to John F. Magill. The buildings have ceased to be used for educational purposes. The Guys are purchasing the tract of land from the heirs of John F. Magill.

TO: John F. Dent, William L. Thomas and Henry J. Carroll, being the Board of County School Commissioners of St. Mary's County.
FROM: John F. Magill
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 2, folio 433.
DATE: June 29, 1877.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 acre "for the purpose of erecting...a school house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of St. Mary's County...beginning for the same at a stone on the side of the public road leading from the Forrest Landing and Bonds Wharf to Leonardtown a corner boundry of the said John F. Magill's and James R. Thompson's lands and running thence with said road southwestward thirty yards to a small locust planted on the side of said road thence eastwardly thirty-eight yards to another small locust planted and thence eastwardly parallel with said John F. Magill and James R. Thompson and thence northerly with said line to the beginning." This

SM-502, Phillis Wheatley School
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

deed contains the provision that once the land is no longer used for educational purposes, the property will revert to the grantor. The school buildings, however, will remain the property of the School Board.

SM-502
Phillis Wheatley School
Hollywood vicinity
Hollywood Quad

Hollywood

Holly was

St Johns

Joy Chase

HOLLYWOOD, MD.

SE-4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE
38076-C5-TF-024

1963

PHOTOREVISED 1984
DMA 5660 I SE-SERIES V833



